

New York Aug 13. 1857

Prof Asa Gray,

Dear Sir: We have your favor of Aug 11, and beg to thank you for its fullness & frankness. We think it will be better to send the contract for attestation now, while it is fresh, as it is essential, and may be overlaid by other matters if forgotten. We will soon send it.

We are gratified with your approval of our arrangement with Mr Putnam, though regretting, with you, the necessity which has occasioned it. We trust, with you, they ^{books} will be profitable; nor shall we forget that the reputation & learning & zeal of their author will ^{create} a large part of their success. But this will only be done by great labor & expense on our part: we unfortunately find that obtaining large sales for school books ^{requires} ~~costs~~ immense outlays. We were aware that your bargain with Putnam was a favorable one to him, ~~but~~ we had neither claim nor expectation that an equally favorable one w^d be made with us. And in suggesting the substitution of the definite sum of \$100, for a percentage, on the new work, we did not intend at all to ^{place} ~~put~~ it on the same basis as the other works: we supposed, on the contrary, that we were proposing much better terms ^{in proportion} for you. Permit us to say, that proposal was made at the moment of writing, without any other purpose or thought than to simplify our accounts with you by putting all on the same basis; and we mentioned that sum as, in our opinion, much more favorable in proportion to you, than the others. But we have no preference for it at all, (except for its simplicity) and shall most cheerfully agree to whichever arrangement you may prefer. And so, as to copyright; we stated at some length, our views as to the just percentage, giving our reasons for supposing that 10 per cent. on the wholesale price was a large proportionate copyright than 10 per cent. on retail would be from publishers pursuing the old methods. We understood your reply to give assent to that proposal: but on recalling it, we see you did not agree to it formally. It is the basis on which all our

more important & recent copyrights are based; & in ordinary cases we wd not consent to take up a book, in our manner, on any other terms. But we are aware of the great value and excellence of your books - the care & conscientiousness bestowed upon them, and we are therefore, ready to accede to whatever you may think you should have. You have our view of the matter; we doubt not you will give it all due consideration, and shall be willing to leave the question - whether ^{the} definite sum per year, as suggested - or 10% ct on wholesale - a retail - to your candid judgment. If you can name a definite sum you think wd be right, it wd simplify matters: or if you prefer to name a round sum for your entire interest, we shd be glad to receive & consider it.

As to the comparative profitability of the new work - in what we said, no by no means intended to intimate any doubt as to its usefulness, or as to the labor & learning you wd bring to its preparation. But we meant to say, our experience led us to anticipate but a limited sale for a primary Botany, however good. The study of Botany is mostly confined to adult pupils: its introduction into common schools will be slow & difficult, because the curriculum is already crowded with indispensable studies, & because teachers do not know how to teach it. We have just inquired of our salesmen, who report that the sale of the existing primary botanies is not as one to four, compared with adult works. We may be mistaken, & hope it turn out that we are; but we see no grounds for any such anticipations as wd ~~place~~ place any primary work on the same footing as the Lepros, or Manual. We say this, not to depreciate the value of copyright on the new work - for we are willing to arrange for a percentage; but because we candidly think that no merit in such a work, nor energy of publishers can give it a sale like that which ~~is~~ the larger works, as Lepros & Manu, may expect. We wd not like you to be disappointed - Yet a respectable & growing sale can be secured,

which, with the incidental benefits it will bring to the whole series, will make it quite worth your while to go on & complete the work. Now that it has been announced, it wd be injurious to all parties to discontinue; & we may say that Putnam, not we, made the ^{first} announcement. As to title, that you suggest is very good, except its length. Very much depends on an easy, distinctive & short title - which "Botany for Young People" hardly is. On this important account, if you can consent, we shd prefer the one suggested by us: "Young Youth's Botany - How Plants Grow." We shd be glad to know how many new cuts you wd probably wish for the new work.

We are gratified exceedingly with the labor & care you have bestowed on the fifth edition of the Text-Book: it will deserve, & in truth will attain, a much larger circulation than you name. We can hardly express our appreciation of the scholarly zeal & fidelity ~~of~~ displayed in this matter. We c^d wish it had a more exactly descriptive title; wd not its 2^d title do for a general one?

Your hint respecting names, shall be attended to. The mingling of the two names was entirely an oversight. We see the importance & propriety of keeping them ~~separate~~ distinct; I will endeavor to do so hereafter.

We shd be glad to know what cuts in Lepros are defective, & what ones not well printed: Also, to have the corrections of Manual as soon as possible. We have just issued an edition ^{of the latter work,} & shall not probably need ~~more~~ more very soon: but the corrections better be made at once. We shall endeavor to approximate y^r ideal of good printing as soon & far as we can.

Very Respectfully & Truly
Yours Obt Servt
J. Wilson & Hinney
B.